REMARKS

In an office action dated January 16, 2004, the Examiner objected to certain informalities in the Drawing, objected to the Specification; and rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Borman, et al. (US Patent 6,606,654).

Drawing

The Drawing has been amended by removing reference numbers 86, which is not mentioned in the description.

Specification

Applicants have amended the specification to delete text which might be interpreted as an embedded hyperlink. Applicants note that this text was used by way of example to describe the structure of a URL, and was not intended to incorporate any information at the web site referenced by the URL. However, since the text was only an example contained in the background section, and the structure of URLs is well known in the art, applicant does not deem the deleted matter essential to an understanding of the invention herein.

Prior Art

Applicants have substantially amended independent claim 1 and cancelled the remaining independent claims. In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to clarify the essential features of storing links from an electronic document, displaying the links from local storage responsive to selecting the document, and allowing the user to select links before completion of the download of the selected document. Dependent claim 2 has been cancelled, its subject matter now being incorporated into claim 1. New independent claim 28, a program product claim, recites limitations analogous to those contained in claim 1. As amended, the claims are patentable over the cited art.

Applicant's invention is a technique for improving the interactive user interface in a web browser or similar application, where a chain of links is followed to reach a desired web page. Conventionally, web sites are often organized as a hierarchy of individual web pages, in which an individual page is normally reached by accessing the home page, and following a succession of links to the desired page. This process can be somewhat slow, given the delay in downloading individual pages. If a site is frequently visited, a user may know how he wishes to navigate the site, and therefore not need to see the full content of each intermediate page in the navigation.

It is possible for the user in this situation to save the URL of a desired page in his favorites list. However, this is not a complete solution. In some cases, the user, though familiar with the site, does not always access the same page, and may prefer to navigate from the home page, rather than save every possible page to be accessed in the favorites list. In other cases (e.g., where Java applets are used), the web site is structured to prohibit direct access to constituent pages, forcing the user to navigate from the home page.

Applicants improve the user interface by saving embedded link information for the home page and/or other pages in local storage of the user's system. Preferably, the local system also saves some formatting information for these pages as well. If the user selects such a page, the local information is immediately accessed and displayed to the user, concurrently with requesting a download of the selected page from the network. While waiting for the page to download, the user can select one of the locally saved links, causing a request to downloaded that page from the network. The process may continue an indefinite number of levels.

Borman, cited by the Examiner, discloses a system for automatically entering links in the favorites list on a user's local system. *Borman*'s invention is intended for relatively unsophisticated users, who find it difficult to accumulate a favorites list themselves. According to *Borman*, a user accesses a "link server" to request that multiple links be automatically loaded to

the user's favorites list in his browser. The link server downloads a file of links and these are saved as favorites. Thereafter, the links are selected in the conventional manner from the favorites list in order to access the corresponding web sites.

It can be seen that this technique, while potentially useful in some contexts, is substantially different from applicants' technique of saving the links embedded in an electronic document (web page) and displaying them *responsive to user selection of the web page*. The original claims may have been somewhat unclear as to this distinction. Representative amended claim 1 recites:

> 1. A method of accessing electronic documents, comprising the steps of:
> displaying a first electronic document to a user using a display screen of a computer system, said first electronic document being retrieved remotely over a network connected to said computer system;
> storing, in a local storage area of said computer system, link information regarding one or more document links embedded in said first electronic document;
> at a time subsequent to performing said displaying and storing steps, *receiving a user selection selecting the first electronic document for retrieval* remotely over said network by the computer system;
> *in response to said receiving a user selection selecting the first electronic document step, retrieving said link information from said local storage area to display the link information* on said display screen of the computer system, and issuing a request for the first electronic document to said network connected to the computer system;
> in response to displaying said link information, receiving a user selection selecting a link of the displayed link information, said link identifying a second electronic document;
> in response to receiving a user selection selecting a link, issuing a request for said second electronic document to said network; and
> in response to said issuing a request for the first electronic document step, downloading the first electronic document;
> *wherein said step of issuing a request for said second electronic document is performed before said step of downloading said first electronic document.* [emphasis added]

New claim 28 is contains similar key limitations.

Although favorites lists are well known, and they do store links in a local storage, their behavior is quite different from that recited above. A favorites list requires the user to select the

list, then select a link from the list. In the above recited method, the user *selects a first electronic document*, and responsive to selecting the document, the system concurrently retrieves and displays the links from local storage, and accesses the document over the network. The document, of course, contains the links, but in accordance with the claimed method, the user can select a locally stored link, causing the linked-to document to be accessed, before the first document is downloaded. Thus, it is not necessary to wait for the first document to download. Moreover, as claimed in dependent claims 26 and 36, this process may continue in a chain of links by selecting a third document from links contained in the second document.

Borman discloses storing links locally, as is done in a conventional favorites list. However, these links are invoked directly from the favorites list. If one were to again select the original web site from which the links were obtained, *Borman* would simply download the selected web page. Selecting the web site would not cause the links to be loaded and displayed from local memory, and the user would be unable to access any such links until the selected page is downloaded. Thus, *Borman* fails to teach the essential recited features of the present invention, and the claims, as amended, are not anticipated by *Borman*.

Nor are the amended claims obvious over *Borman*. *Borman* is directed only to the narrow problem of populating the favorites list with links, and assumes that the user will use the conventional favorites list selection interface to access the links. *Borman* is directed to the problem of unsophisticated users not knowing how to construct a favorites list, and not to increasing user efficiency when selecting links. There is nothing in *Borman* to suggest accessing the saved links using the different mechanism claimed by applicants.

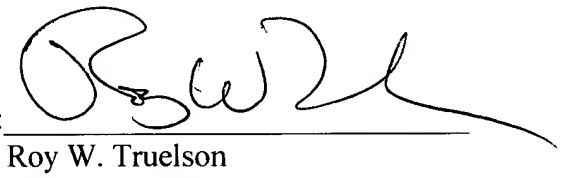
To the extent *Borman* suggests anything, it teaches away from applicants' invention by advocating the use of a favorites list and disclosing a technique for populating the favorites list with an increasing number of links. Applicants, on the other hand, recognize that in some

circumstances, the user may wish to avoid using the favorites list interface, because if all the links in a particular web site are saved, the favorites list becomes unwieldy. It is therefore desirable to link to only the home page, and use applicants' technique for drilling down to lower level pages within the web site. *Borman*, on the other hand, would suggest simply saving all the links in the favorites list. For all these reasons, *Borman* fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all claims. In addition, the Examiner is encouraged to contact applicant's attorney by telephone if there are outstanding issues left to be resolved to place this case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

CARY L. BATES, et al.

By: 

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